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Subject: Rare interview confirms PA pays salaries to terrorists and not social aid to families



Bulletin  
April 10, 2013

**Rare interview with wife of Palestinian prisoner  
proves PMW's contention  
that PA pays salaries to prisoners,  
including terrorists,  
and not social welfare to their families,  
as reported by foreign ministries**

**PA TV interview confirms that  
Norway and UK Foreign Ministries  
gave incorrect information to their parliaments**

PA TV journalist to wife of prisoner:  
"For nearly four years, the prisoner's allowance from the Ministry of  
Prisoners' Affairs... has not reached your hands and your children's  
hands... Did you try to turn to the authorities?"

Prisoner's wife:  
"A year and a half ago, I went to the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs...  
Their answer was: 'Your husband transfers it to the person he wants.  
It's in his power not to transfer [it to you] and we can't do anything  
about it.'"

Prisoner's wife:  
"[My husband] told me: 'If you do what I want, it [the monthly salary]  
will return to you. As long as you are like this, it won't return to you.'"

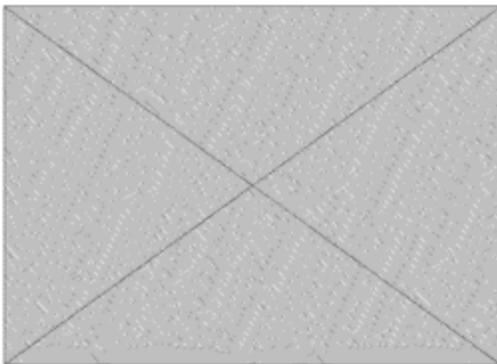
[http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc\\_id=8783](http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=8783)

by Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik

Since 2011, Palestinian Media Watch has been supplying governments and media worldwide with documentation that the PA pays high monthly salaries to Palestinians imprisoned in Israel for security offenses, including terrorists serving multiple life-sentences for murder.

Yet for nearly two years, the British and Norwegian Foreign Ministries have told their MPs that PMW's documentation was incorrect. They argued that the PA does not pay salaries to security prisoners, which would be a reward for terror, but gives "social aid to the families" like other PA social welfare programs. This, they have now explained, was what the PA assured them.

In spite of all PMW's documentation, Norway and the UK have justified their continued funding of the PA, saying that none of their support money was going into a funding program specifically for terrorists, but was going to the wives and children. (See quotes below.)



PMW is now releasing a recent interview with a wife of a Palestinian prisoner that verifies the accuracy of PMW's reports. In the interview, the prisoner's wife and mother of five children complains repeatedly that the prisoner, her husband, has not given her and their children control of his salary, but instead gave it to his brother.

**PA TV journalist Roba Al-Najjar to wife of prisoner:**

"For nearly four years, the prisoner's allowance from the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs and the official institutions has not reached your hands and your children's hands... Did you try to turn to the authorities?"

**Prisoner's wife:**

"A year and a half ago, I went to the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs... Their answer was: 'Your husband transfers it to the person he wants. It's in his power not to transfer [it to you] and we can't do anything about it.'"

**Prisoner's wife:**

"[My husband] told me: 'If you do what I want, it [the monthly salary] will return to you. As long as you are like this, it won't return to you.'"

According to the prisoner's wife, many other prisoners likewise don't give control of their salary payments to their wives:

**Prisoner's wife:**

"It's not just me, this problem, many of the prisoners' wives and children suffer from it, from the transfer of his salary, the prisoner's salary."

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This testimony refutes the claims of UK Minister of State Alan Duncan in his letter on behalf of UK's DfID, Department for International Development:

"It is true that in some cases, payments will go to families of those who have committed the sort of crime that we utterly condemn. We believe however that it would be wrong to punish innocent children and dependent family members by denying them access to social support."

[Duncan, in letter to UK MP Mike Freer, Nov. 16, 2012]

It also refutes the claims of Norway's Foreign Ministry that the payments are "social benefits to the families":

"Dagbladet [newspaper] has asked the [Norwegian] government a number of questions regarding PMW's information [about salaries prisoners], but the Foreign Ministry denies these problems and refers to the salary payments as social benefits. '... Such social transfers have been made for as long as the PA has existed and on social grounds, including considerations for children in the family.'"

[Frode Overland Andersen of the Foreign Ministry, Dagbladet.no (Norway), Sept. 4, 2011]

As is clear from the account of the prisoner's wife broadcast on PA TV and the response of the PA Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, the payment is the prisoner's *salary*, is *under his control*, and is *not* a social welfare payment.

In practice, since a prisoner does not have direct access to his salary, another person must be appointed to control the money. PMW has documented that PA law gives the prisoner, and not his wife, the sole right to appoint a representative by signing a power of attorney form brought to him by a Red Cross representative or his lawyer.

When interviewed for the program, the Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Karake said that the purpose of the payments were to help the families:

"The purpose of the assistance given to the prisoners is to stand by their families, by the mother and father, by the children and the wife as a result of the son's absence or the father's absence for many years in the occupation's prison."

However, the PA TV journalist Roba Al-Najjar challenged him because of the problems experienced by prisoners' wives who don't have control of their husbands' salaries:

"We know that legally the prisoner has the right to give the power of attorney to a family member that he considers suitable... What is Your Honor's experience in this matter?"

Minister Karake in his answer confirmed that it is the prisoner who controls the money and he is aware of the problems of the wives:

"I have clearly noticed recently, in the past few years, there have been social problems and the current procedure in the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs is that the prisoner determines who has the power of attorney. We decided that this will be on condition that the person with the power of attorney must be a first-degree relative."

And as the interview shows - in reality that relative who receives control of the salary is not necessarily the wife.

PMW notes that Norwegian Foreign Minister Eide recently acknowledged to the Parliamentary Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs that the PA gave Norway wrong information regarding the prisoners' salaries. PMW is not aware of any public reports that UK Minister of State Alan Duncan has likewise notified his Parliament that the UK was misled by the PA.

Neither Norway nor Britain has indicated if the fact that the PA pays salaries to convicted terrorists in prison from its budget, will impact on their future funding of the PA budget.

Click to view 9 minutes of the [interview with the prisoner's wife](#) on PA TV.

Below is the transcript of 9 minutes of the interview, including Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake's response to PA TV.

To review how the story has been developing in Norway:

Click to see how [PMW's findings generated this debate in Norway](#), the responses of [Norwegian MPs](#), and the [Parliamentary Committee investigation](#) questioning why the Foreign Ministry did not give the correct information to parliament earlier.

Click to see how the Parliamentary Committee expressed [dissatisfaction with the Foreign Minister's first answer](#), and how the Foreign Minister in his second letter [admitted that the PA has special support program for prisoners](#), including terrorists, in Israel, and how that prompted the Committee to question [what the Foreign Ministry did to verify the information it had received from the PA](#).

Click to see the [UK Parliament debate](#) of PMW's findings about PA hate

incitement and UK's funding of the PA.

***The following is the transcript of the 9 minute video:***

**PA TV journalist Roba Al-Najjar:**

"She suffered in silence and we couldn't stand there and do nothing. [Is control over the money] her right? - Yes! Is [this] her children's urgent need? - Absolutely! Do they have control? Unfortunately not."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar interviewing Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake:** "We respect your request not to show your face and to alter your voice... In addition, I am telling the viewers that we did not film in your house. What is your story, dear sister?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "It's not just me, this problem, many of the prisoners' wives and children suffer from it, from the transfer of his salary, the prisoner's salary (Arabic: *Ma'ash*)... My husband is sentenced [to prison] and I have five children."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "Until when is your husband sentenced? We wish him freedom, Allah willing."

**Prisoner's wife:** "About eight years. It's already a year I suffer greatly, because he transferred the salary (*Ma'ash*), that is the allowance (*Mukhassas*), to his family."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "You have five children. How old is the oldest?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "17 and a half."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "And the youngest?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "Seven years."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "When did he transfer the power of attorney for the allowance (*Mukhassas*) [to his family]? How long after his arrest?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "It's been four years. At first I did not have it [power of attorney] and later on I had it. After that, it was transferred to a different person. That other person is from his family. There are conditions, that is, when they send me money... They delay [the money] and make excuses: 'Today, tomorrow...' It's hard for me and I suffer greatly. I tried to work."

**Issa Karake, Minister of Prisoners' Affairs:** "It makes no sense that a free and noble nation will abandon the families of the victims, the families of the fighters, without a provider and without standing beside them so that they

can live with dignity and pride..."

[Journalist Roba Al-Najjar interviews the prisoner's wife]

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "Do you know what your husband's allowance (Arabic: *mukhassas*) was?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "Don't know."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "You have no idea?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "I have no idea."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "How much money does your husband's family send you each month?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "Each month they send two checks. Sometimes it's as my husband tells them: 'Transfer this' and sometimes, depending on the circumstances, that is, he decides in a phone conversation... They made me feel that 'this isn't yours'. That is, enough, I don't want it [the money], now I don't want to receive what he sent."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "What do they say, what do they tell you?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "I feel like they're doing me a favor..."

**PA Minister Issa Karake:** "Some of the prisoners are not aware, some of the prisoners are influenced by the social situation and social problems in the family. We try the best we can to distance the prisoner from these problems, and we speak with all family members..."

**Prisoner's wife:** "I went to the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs and told them my problem. They told me: 'We cannot do anything unless he personally transfers it to you.'"

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "In other words, for nearly four years, the prisoner's allowance from the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs and the official institutions has not reached your hands and your children's hands... Did it ever happen, for example, that one of the months, they didn't send you [anything]?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "[For] almost a year."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "A whole year?"

**Prisoner's wife:** "Yes, some months, if I add them up - approximately a year"

and a half they didn't send [it] as a means of pressure."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "Do you send him a message with your children during their visits or when you are able to visit your husband: 'Our situation is such and such, and we suffer, please return the power of attorney to me?'"

**Prisoner's wife:** "Yes, I asked many times, and I myself told him this before. He told me: 'If you do what I want, it will return to you. As long as you are like this, it won't return to you.'" [...]

**Journalist interviewing Minister of Prisoners' Affairs Issa Karake:** "Can we speak candidly Mr. Issa [Minister of Prisoners' Affairs], about the issue of transferring the power of attorney? We know that legally the prisoner has the right to give the power of attorney to a family member that he considers suitable..."

**PA Minister Issa Karake:** "In the past few years, there have been social problems and the current procedure in the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs is that the prisoner determines who has the power of attorney. We decided that this will be on condition that the person with the power of attorney must be a first-degree relative. Meaning that if he is married, the wife [is given the power of attorney]; and if he is unmarried, the mother or father. If the mother or father is deceased, it is transferred to the brother or sister. If the wife has passed away, [the power of attorney goes] to the son, i.e., it stays among first-degree relatives. But the criteria - it is the prisoner himself who gives the power of attorney, by means of the International Red Cross or through an attorney by means of a power of attorney [form] signed by him, in which he gives the power of attorney to whomever he wants from within this group - first-degree relatives - to receive his monetary allowances."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "Did you try to turn to the authorities?" [...]

**Prisoner's wife:** "A year and a half ago, I went to the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs, and to the Prisoners' Club... Their answer was: 'Your husband transfers it to the person he wants. It's in his power not to transfer [it to you] and we can't do anything about it.'"

**PA Minister Issa Karake:** "Problems occur, that is, this is natural. This is a large sector, a very large sector in our society. When we are presented with this kind of a problem, we first of all clarify things with the prisoner himself, try to understand the family's situation and the nature of the dispute, the nature of the problem."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "Mr. Issa, can I understand from your words that transferring the power of attorney is included in the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs' legal authority, to interfere in a decisive manner? I mean, that it is

not the prisoner's absolute right."

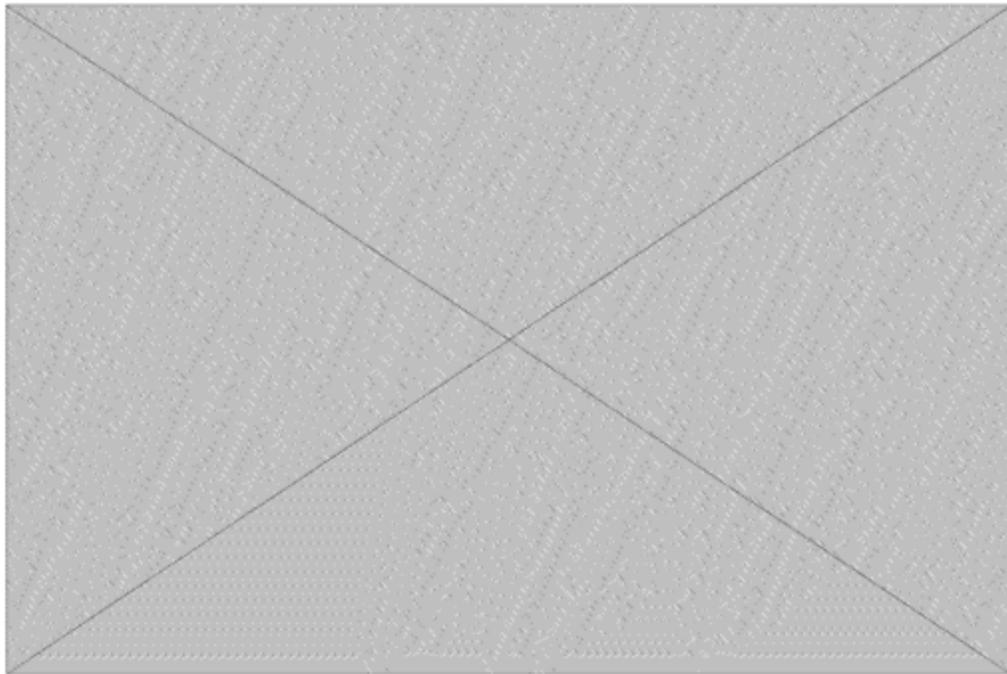
**PA Minister Issa Karake:** "In principle, this is the prisoner's right, but we are looking into it. If the request to transfer the power of attorney to another person is illogical or is not objective, we don't approve it."

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "Can we understand from your words that if, for example, this mother will come to you -"

**PA Minister Issa Karake:** "I will change this. This is an injustice!"

**Journalist Roba Al-Najjar:** "I delivered a letter to Issa Karake, Minister of Prisoners' Affairs, and he in turn studied your problem in detail, and decided to transfer the power of attorney for the salary [*ma'ash*] back to you."

[PA TV (Fatah), Feb. 17, 2013]



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